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## Spooky Choice

**F**ormer NATO Ambassador David Abshire wasn't the first choice of White House officials to coordinate the handling of the Iran-contra scandal. For a time Reagan's men tested a surprising candidate on top Republican leaders: former CIA Director Richard Helms. In 1977 Helms pleaded no contest to charges that he failed to testify "fully" to Congress about the CIA's covert role in efforts to overthrow Chilean President Salvador Allende. Given that background, GOP officials warned that Helms was hardly the man to symbolize White House candor with Congress this time. "It was a bad idea—and they didn't seem to know—or care—how bad," says one GOP congressional leader.

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